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LETTER DATED 17 OCTOBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that on 13 September 1996 the Bihar, a vessel belonging to the Oceanographic Research Centre of the University of Basra, was conducting a fishery resources survey within Iraqi territorial waters near buoy No. 5 in the Khawr Abd Allah when it was intercepted by two Kuwaiti gunboats. One of the Kuwaiti servicemen on board the gunboats fired a burst of shots at the deck of the Bihar and one of them then boarded and searched the vessel, inspecting the crew members' identity papers and asking for their names, occupation and place of residence. Having found nothing, the Kuwaitis finally left Iraqi territorial waters, heading for Kuwait.

I request that you intervene with Kuwait with a view to halting such hostile acts, which violate the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Unwarranted and unlawful acts of this kind have been occurring frequently in Iraqi territorial waters recently and are clearly aimed at creating a climate of tension in the region. They also constitute a flagrant violation of the territorial waters and sovereignty of a State Member of the United Nations.

I also reaffirm the legitimate right of the Republic of Iraq to seek compensation for the property damage sustained by it as a result of this hostile act, in accordance with the principle of international accountability.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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